LONG BEACH WATER DEPARTMENT
The Standard in Water Conservation &
Environmental Stewardship

PRESS RELEASE

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Long Beach Water Slated to receive $1 Million for Desalination from California Department of Water Resources

SACRAMENTO, CA – The California Department of Water Resources has recommended that Long Beach Water receive an additional $1 million for its national seawater desalination research and development effort, the largest project of its kind in the United States. The funding recommendation will bring the total State of California contribution to the project to $4 million. The project is focused on optimizing promising new technologies to substantially reduce energy consumption as well as impacts on the marine environment. The Long Beach Desalination Project is being undertaken in partnership with the United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, with $5.25 million in federal funding provided by the United States Congress since 2002.

This State funding recommendation, made available through Proposition 50, the Water Security, Clean Drinking Water, Coastal and Beach Protection Act passed by voters in 2002, is the second large award Long Beach has received for its seawater desalination project from the State of California in just two years. Last year, Long Beach Water was awarded $3 million in Proposition 50 funds. Since 2005, the California Department of Water Resources has awarded nearly $23 million for seawater desalination projects statewide.

"This funding recommendation reinforces the importance of a measured approach to seawater desalination research and development," stated Kevin L. Wattier, General Manager of the Long Beach Water Department. "This money will be spent on optimizing both the energy efficiency and environmental issues, among other things, currently hindering implementation of full-scale seawater desalination in Long Beach."

High operating costs, due primarily to high rates of power consumption, and environmental issues related to open-ocean intake and discharge have rendered seawater desalination cost/environmentally prohibitive in Long Beach. Although significant advancements in technology have extended membrane life while lowering energy requirements, overall energy consumption remains extremely high due to the very high-pressure requirements of reverse osmosis membranes.

Using a small 9,000 gallon-per-day pilot-scale desalination facility, the Long Beach Water Department has reduced the overall energy requirement (by 20 to 30 percent) of seawater desalination using a relatively low-pressure two staged nano-filtration process, developed by Long Beach Water engineers, known as the "Long Beach Method."

This unique process is now being tested on a larger scale. With funding assistance from the United State Bureau of Reclamation and the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power, Long Beach Water is conducting research at a constructed 300,000 gallon-per-day, fully operational facility incorporating the two-stage nano-filtration process. This large-scale facility is needed to verify the energy savings when employing full-scale membranes and energy recovery units, among other things. The goal is to verify energy savings of the two-stage nano-filtration process and to optimize the process so that it can be duplicated.

Together with its funding partners, Long Beach Water is also undertaking design and construction of an Under Ocean Floor Intake and Discharge Demonstration System, the first of its kind in the world, that will seek to demonstrate that viable, environmentally responsive intake and discharge systems can be developed along the coast of California.

The Long Beach Water Department is an urban Southern California water supply agency and the standard in water conservation and environmental stewardship.

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